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ABSTRACT

Perspectives on issues in postsecondary education are presented with some reference to Oklahoma. Enrollment trends and the push toward cost effective educational programs are considered, and it is suggested that the important issue is often overlooked: the need to clarify the role of higher education institutions, or what society demands from the educational sector. A collapse of the spirit of community in American society and the growth of groups of people with special interests are seen as overall influential factors. Within the educational sector, there is a temptation to react more to the economic pressures, to react only to the needs of specialization as the top priority. It is proposed that higher education should produce graduates with perspective and not with tunnel vision, or the point of view of narrow specialization. Additionally, the preservation of the private sector is extremely important for the total system. Among the necessary responses are to avoid duplication of graduate programs. In Oklahoma planning for higher educational programs is a coordinated effort with the public and private sectors participating. It is suggested that it is possible to build areas of excellence in graduate programs, plan together to avoid duplication in the public and private sectors, and enter into some contractual relationships for shared services and resources. There is a need for higher education institutions to relate to the needs of society, and not overproduce teachers, for example. Additional concerns include whether new program development is feasible, whether new buildings are needed, and how to prepare for change and new roles when old programs are eliminated. (SW)

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# Inservice Education Program (IEP)

## Paper Presented at a Seminar for State Leaders in Postsecondary Education

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THE ISSUES

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U.S. SENATOR DAVID L. BOREN

Oklahoma

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"The Issues"

by

David L. Boren
U.S. Senator, Oklahoma

I think that before we begin to think about some of the issues that are involved, we must think for a minute about where we are now, where we are headed, and in what place we find ourselves. We have experienced a dramatic increase and of course are now leveling off in enrollments, in the field of higher education in most parts of the country during the past few years.

When you think about it, it took three-hundred years for us to reach the one million mark in total enrollment in higher education in the United States, from the early beginnings in the private sector, with the founding of Harvard. It took only thirty years for us to reach the second million and, incredibly, it took only two more years to reach the third million of enrollment in higher education in this country, which was in 1962. Now we're somewhere between 13 and 14 million. So, in twenty years, we exploded from 1 million, which took three-hundred years of growth, to somewhere in the neighborhood of 14 million in terms of total enrollment. At the same time, we have been experiencing other changes. Of course, the first three centuries of education in this country were dominated almost entirely by the private sector.

By 1960 we had reached the turning point where half of the university students were in private institutions and half were in public institutions. And since 1950 we have gone from the half and half mark to now, where 80 percent of all students in higher education in this country are being educated in the public sector. These shifts are somewhat interrelated because of the tremendous growth of enrollments. The public sector has the capability to tax and float bonds, and this is the reason it has the ability to keep pace with enrollments. Thus, it was inevitable that the public share of higher education in terms of enrollment would increase. The passage of the National Defense Education Act and the whole reaction to technological advances in the Eastern Block countries such as the launching of Sputnik brought about a push for more Federal Aid for graduate and research programs particularly in the scientific areas. This aid also helped the growth of the public sector because many private industries oriented toward a broad curriculum simply did not have the physical facilities, or the laboratory facilities, to take advantage of some of these programs. So we've been experiencing a trend toward rapid growth in the public sector partially through a shift in students from the private ones. We've also seen in this country in the field of higher education more and more specialization.

More than half of our students nationwide are part-time students. More than half of these are individuals who will not receive uninterrupted terminal degrees. This will lead to more and more specialized courses, more and more job-skill related courses and a

movement away from liberal arts. We are living through a time when this is inevitable, and it is proper in many respects that we are focusing more and more on the cost effectiveness of our programs. Enrollment has begun to level off in the past two years, and higher education has gained about six percent in terms of total appropriations over and above inflation, but that's not much improvement in terms of program improvement. I think we ought to realize that harder times are coming. When we look at what has happened to the national economy, when we look at the strain on the dollar, when we look at the trade imbalance and the magnitude of it, and when we see the rate of inflation, we see that we are headed for a period of reduced budgets. As we try to slow the growth of inflation, we all realize that we're going to have to justify the dollars we spend more and more. Thus, there is a real emphasis on trying to add programs that are cost-effective. With enrollment leveling off, there is more competition for students between institutions, and competition among the public and the private sector strictly for economic reasons. So there has been a temptation to offer courses that will appeal to the students so that you can directly state to the students: "Come to our institution, take this course of study because it will increase your earning power, or you're going to be able to get a job that will immediately need this kind of work when you graduate."

This particularly appeals to the typical horrified student who's coming back to college very often trying to increase earning power. So we get a move for more specialization; and a move toward a narrower

focus in our education. I think sometimes that all these issues we talk about cause us to lose sight of the biggest questions of all, and that is something I would like to address before we get into some of the detailed issues. When we talk about how we can be cost effective, what will be the distribution and relationship between the public and the private sector, and we talk about the kinds of programs that can be offered least expensively and interrelate back to skills, we talk about how we do it. It sometimes seems to me that we lose sight of what it is that we should be doing. That's got to be the first question we must answer. What is the greatest need, what is the central purpose, for our higher educational system in this country? What do we most need from our institutions of higher education as a society at this point in time? I think we have become too concerned sometimes about the distribution of funds, about the way in which we do something, and we forget to think about what it is we should be doing in the first place. By focusing on a formula, or by focusing on the cost effective one, we all too often overlook the first and underlying question. I hear speakers do this all the time.

I attended a conference not too long ago, at the Southern Growth Policy Board meeting in which a speaker talked about the regional problems of this country and spoke of two cities, Lowell, Mass. and Abilene, Texas. He told the tale about Lowell, which had an unemployment rate of about eighteen percent and losing population, and Abilene which was growing and has a three and one-half percent unemployment rate. He talked about a shrinking tax base in Lowell,

and he talked about the fact that in Lowell, thirty-eight percent of the people were receiving public assistance, whereas in Abilene only eight percent were. He really painted a picture of a city that was thriving and growing and developing as compared with one that was decaying, shrinking, and getting into deeper and deeper trouble. At the end of his remarks, he brought this all to a focal point of attention, and he said that the really cirtical problem facing this nation today was federal funding. How do we revise the federal funding formula to make sure that federal funds go to Lowell, where they are needed and not make their way to Abilene, where they are not needed. I couldn't help but think to myself that surely we've missed the whole point of the question which is, "Why is Abilene growing and thriving while Lowell is declining? How do we deal with the causes of what is going on, not how do we treat the symptoms?" And so it should be that we begin to think about the primary issues that face higher education today.

We must think first of all, what is it that we should be doing? What is it that society most demands from us today? I would say if I were to look around and from my experience over the past four years in the governor's office, that if there is anything that concerns me, as to what is happening in our country more than anything else, it's what I would describe as a collapse of the spirit of community in our society. You see it very clearly, for example, when you go through the budget making process. We have become organized into groups to try and get our share of the pie and to make sure that we get it. Our whole society has become organized

into groups of people around their interests, where they happen to live geographically, what their profession or occupation happens to be, and what their social or economic status or level may be. We see this so clearly in municipal government, where the policemen organize and strike to see if they can perhaps get their share and because the policemen organize, the firemen organize, and try to get their share. Because they do so, others do so, on and on and on. We see it all across the country, and I think one reason why our economy is so out of control is because everybody sits back and says "Look, since others are getting their share, we're demanding ours." Their is no willingness by the community to sit down and resort to some self-discipline or restraint and to sacrifice.

There is no feeling of mutual concern or understanding. We are becoming Balkanized in this country into geographical regions on all too many issues. I often wonder when I sit in the Governor's office and attend various meetings as I hear all the various groups and organizations. I often wonder if we could get together in an old fashioned New England town meeting again. What would it be like, and how would it compare in quality with the original kind of town meetings that were first held when everyone sat down and tried to determine what would be best for all of us, and say, "I see your point of view, and here is my interest. I'll compromise my interest and try to be fair to you." Who would get up in the town meeting if we had one today and speak for the entire community? We are absolutely paralyzed in this nation today with regard to making

decisions because we don't have that kind of experience, that perspective, that ability in our experience to see the other person's point of view.

We have had a collapse of decision-making. No wonder we have an urgent crisis in this country, for example, we're going to have to double the number of power plants to maintain full employment in the next nine years. It takes on the average about fourteen years to get a permit to build a power plant in this country of any type or variety. How in the world can we solve the problems? Even building our roads today in this country can create some political problems for the governor. It takes on the average about eighty-four months from the time the decision is made to build the road until the funds are finally released. Look what that does for the Governor. It's just terrible. It is a serious problem to rebuild this community and bring us together again as a country.

I happen to believe that at the heart of our political system is a great inconsistency. We believe in truly inconsistent philosophies without ever realizing it. If we were to take a poll and to ask, "Do you believe that the majority can rule, that decisions can be made in society by whichever side of the policy questions gets the most votes?", I think most of us in this room would say "yes." I believe in that principle. But on the other hand, if we were to say, "Should even the majority have the right to violate certain inalienable rights, such as the freedom of speech, the freedom of expression, the freedom of worship?", we

would hear people say "No, there are certain inalienable rights that can not be violated by anybody." Then you get down to the question of who decides and should majority rule. Well, if you let the majority decide when individual rights are violated, then we would have no protection at times, and so we believe in two inconsistent philosophies at the same time. Inalienable and individual rights and majority rule, which can certainly come into conflict. How have we been able to harmonize them all these years?

The Supreme Court has been one of the institutions that has tried to harmonize them, but basically we have been able to keep both of these principles together. Why? It's been because there has been a certain fairness that has usually prevailed with most people. We have usually had a fair and restrained community-minded majority that has been broad enough in perspective to see the right and needs of other individuals even if they were different, and even if they didn't happen to agree with them. That's what we are in danger of losing. If we lose that basic sense of consensus and fairness of community, or whatever you want to call it, then I think we're going to lose what we've built in this country. It's a great temptation for us in education to react more to the economic pressures, to react only to the needs of specialization as the top priority. I think we're on our way to becoming that way. How ironic it would be if we were to become the most federalized people in the world, and lose all we have because we didn't have an understanding of our own

interests, culture, and humanity?

What is the great need facing our educational system today? What should we be doing above all else? I believe very deeply and very sincerely that we must be broadly educating our students as the first and primary calling of higher education, so that we produce graduates with perspective and not with tunnel vision. So that we produce graduates who can speak for the community, and can speak from perspective and not just from a point of view of narrow specialization. And so, I expect to start from that point which hasn't changed from the beginning of our educational system but that still must be our primary mission. The development of the private sector must be maintained and why we must not allow it to be squeezed out is because historically those institutions have maintained a broad curriculum provision. They have also maintained the freedom that we have enjoyed in the public sector by ensuring academic freedom and the freedom of discussion for every graduate in the private sector. They have been free to experiment and we must maintain that kind of innovation, that kind of breadth, within our whole system of higher education.

Thus, we must decide what we should do and how we can best do it with limited resources. We've got to keep in mind that preservation of the private sector is extremely important for the total system, and that the classroom professor at the state institution should be just as vitally concerned about the preservation of the private sector as should be the professor at the private institution. How can we best do the job? By maintaining a broad perspective for

our students, by maintaining a healthy attitude toward our curriculum and how can we most effectively do it? How can we do it least expensively? And what are the problems we have had? What is it we need to decide to be doing? What are the issues and details which we are dealing with?

First of all, we cannot duplicate graduate programs as we've said over and over again. It is simply too expensive. I hope that all our institutions could maintain their broad base of curriculum for an outlook, so that we produce students who have the fundamentals of a broad liberal arts education and not sell out to the market and what the students themselves demand. Because if they perfected such a curriculum there would be no need for an institution in the first place. Once we have done that, how do we best and most effectively do the rest of it? We provide full-ranging programs and advanced programs, technical programs, and graduate programs, but we must first of all avoid duplication. It means not duplicating in one public institution the graduate programs of another, but it also means we must not have the public and the private sectors duplicating each other. In Oklahoma, we've tried to do this with our state system of higher education, the equivalent of your State Board of Regents, which receives money in lump sum and distributes it to the state institutions. The initiative for the creation of the state board in Oklahoma, by the way, came as much from the private institutions as from the public. The chairman of the first planning board, the first board that was set up to plan for effective higher education, was a president of one of

the private institutions in Oklahoma. The private institutions are numerous, and although they are not directly governed as to curriculum, or internal affairs, they are full-member institutions of the state higher education system in Oklahoma, and I think this should be true all over the country. Planning for higher educational programs is one coordinated effort with the public and private sectors participating. For example, if the state institutions are to approve the creation of a new law school, a new medical school, or a major thrust in the creation of a major college of either a public or private university, it must be approved through the process of the state regional board of higher education, even for the private sector. Now, why would the private sector agree?

Number one, for economic reasons. They are very concerned about other private institutions of lesser quality coming on the scene to take away students and compete with them or public institutions, so that the money is spread even thinner. Actually what you end up with instead of seven or eight or ten viable, high caliber, quality private institutions, you have twenty watered-down programs or end up with twenty units that are not able to survive economically. Thus, planning is the "certificate of need" in these programs. Now you can't run out and build a hospital or a nursing home anymore in the medical field because you have to study the impact on the cost of beds, or unoccupied beds, or the cost of the whole field. And what are you going to do if that's the certificate of need? In essence that's the way we

look at the whole educational system in Oklahoma. Basically, it is not a means to intrude in the innovations of the private sector but simply is more a means of protecting the private sector. So you must have your plans. You must avoid duplications. There is no excuse for a state institution to begin to offer in the same community a graduate program that's already offered by a private institution on a basis of excellence, so that in essence it puts the private institution out of business. Obviously, it would be foolish for the private sector to duplicate what the public sector is already doing.

I would hope that we could still build areas of excellence on a very selective basis, each institution looking to the faculty, and its unique resources. Certainly, there are graduate programs that are stronger at some institutions than at others. This has to do with faculty recruitment, the attitude of the institution towards growth, and we build on those. We should build areas of excellence in graduate programs, and plan together with the public and private sectors to avoid duplication, and enter into some contractual relationships for shared services. If you're in the same area, let students from the public institution take certain kinds of programs at the private and vice versa as we have done in Oklahoma.

There are institutions both public and private that have interchangeable credit hours. They can move back and forth to a certain extent in the taking of courses. In addition, we have ten private institutions that participate with the public in-

stitutions in sharing technology and also basic capital outlay. We have a top-ranked television system in all our major institutions in the state. This is a shared cost between both sectors which participate in it. The state builds a relay tower and the trasmitter there is a joint expenditure in terms of the studio, and in maintenance of the system and so on. There are other examples of shared laboratory and shared library facilities between the private and public institutions in the state. I think that it is very, very important that we begin to share some of these costly features, and, by the way, there is a tremendous amount of sharing between the private institutions themselves.

I used to teach at a Baptist related institution in Oklahoma, Oklahoma Baptist University, down the street from St. Gregory College which is a Catholic institution. We kept it very quiet, but for example, in the interrelated curriculum, other than sharing the library and other facilities, the Baptists would be teaching Greek to the Catholics and the Catholics would be teaching Latin to the Baptists. So, we have a good deal of this going on in our state, probably most efficiently, and it is a healthy and good thing. Sometimes this goes into sharing facilities. Other examples include computer services and technical service programs. We have a student aid program that has begun to help the students. I think this is more preferable than direct aid to private institutions because the private institutions would be spurred into too many categorical grant programs. However, through the state program

which aids the individual student, he can use the funds to go to either a public or a private institution that is recognized and is a member of the state system of higher education. Generally, the following issues are ones which must be addressed to preserve the vitality of the private sector.

We've got to stop adding new programs all the time, in both the public and the private sectors. One of the things that is threatening is that funds are taken up by the programs that the institutions want to start. What we are going to have to recognize is that if we are going to have new programs with the same amount of dollars, and have inflation as we did the years before, that the new programs must be good ones, and some we don't need must be terminated. These are hard and tough choices, very tough choices. It really makes them angry when I get an agenda of all the new programs, and I ask for the other papers with all the old programs we want to discontinue, so we don't just water down what we already have. We ought to make these tough choices and be honest with ourselves when we start new programs. And just remember this: it is a lot easier to develop new programs than it is to discontinue the old programs. Because you already have all those faculty members, all the people who want to maintain the status quo and keep comfortable. And so we have to move with extreme caution. I'm not saying we should never create new programs; of course, we've got to adapt to the times. We can't be like the lady who avoids daylight savings time because it wasn't designed that way in the first place, and it would cause her garden to burn

private institutions. We can't go around building these great monuments like we've been doing in the past. Educators, highway builders, architects, engineers and others, all wanted a $300 million state bond issue in Oklahoma and we had to put someting into it for every community in the state in order to get votes over here and votes over there. This happens on a statewide basis to get the necessary votes for passage. In this case, with a $300 million bond issue, they forgot we had $80 million of growth revenue, in other words, we had about $80 million new dollars for all purposes in that budget for the next year. We've got to take away $10 million from that $80 million to serve the bond issue if it passes. We're down to $70 million. It takes about twenty percent of the cost of a capital structure to maintain it. So, twenty percent roughly per year is used to maintain the capital structure. If we build it, then let's use it. Well, twenty percent of the $300 million (60 million), and we're already down to 70 million, then there is only about $10 million left to pay additional costs in state government. Well, we've got to re-orient ourselves and see how it would be to have selection in these areas in which we have decided to build our programs of excellence.

We've got to maintain the strict goal of training others for the future phase out of old programs. We've got to be prepared for change, and be prepared for new roles. Heaven forbid the faculty members who would have to do that, or have to change jobs, or have to face a new occupation temporarily. The program would have to be phased out or what if ninety percent of the faculty had

up with that extra hour of sunlight! We've got to adapt but remain very cautious.

We have got to relate to the needs of society. We're turning out too many teachers, for example, and most states agree that we can't absorb them, and it really galls me that to go into pre-law or into pre-med and in other preprofessional programs, you must have a good gradepoint average and pass a thorough interview. However, only half of these capabilities are required to go into education. To teach our children, we don't want just anyone to be admitted, and if they have the easiest courses of all, we're going to have to up standards. When they ask why, we all know why, because what will we do with all of those faculty members in the school of education. We've got the innovations, and one of the things we might consider doing that would help teachers out in the field, and the faculty members too, would be instead of sitting back in the office, to have more contact with the classrooms they train people to go into. Why not really give the college of education and faculty there the chance to develop in-service education in the schools right across the state? What a wonderful interchange for both! So there are ways of dealing with the problems, of introducing what already is existing, without saying we are going to train twice as many teachers as we need. There are ways to utilize the talents of the faculty in a way that will help everybody, including themselves.

We've also got to get away from the brick and mortar syndrome and this has to do with shared facilities between the public and

tenure and new programs were needed. We have to face some of these tough issues. Thus, if we want to have the funds to operate at all, to perform all of these roles, we have to be able to work together effectively, public and private sectors together, and it is good from the point of view of society and it is practical politics. You've got to become more effective translators of knowledge to the public and to the decision makers. Our institutions need to plug themselves into the political process of where decisions are being made so that the knowledge which is available from our greatest institutions is used by the policy makers to make decisions.

My first year in the legislature, twelve years ago in Oklahoma, I can remember I was working on the environmental policy committee. We were trying to decide whether or not to ban phosphates from the detergents sold in Oklahoma. I received answers daily from all sorts of people. But I remember hearing from others as well, and nobody knew what a phosphate was, and they didn't know how to decide on the issue. Now we were making a decision. One would say, "Well, what does your wife do? Does Duz really make it brighter?" That was the level of our expertise. People all across the state were calling the universities. They may or may not be industry oriented or environmentally oriented, but it would help us approach the problem from a more objective point of view. One thing we've built is an area of resources. Now we've got to build a directory of resources among all the public and private institutions of those people and those faculties that have expertise in certain areas to do research for public policy making. We must put that directly in the hands

of our public policy makers, and our legislators. The more that it was used, a rubbing of shoulders took place between the public policy makers and the academics. It is much better for the appropriations process of higher education, and for our private institutions as well. I know when I was trying to get the tuition grant program, that would include both public and private higher education, there were faculty members who began to serve as staff members in order to learn about a particular problem. They talked about institutions and the state of the individual campuses. All sorts of relationships were formed, which translated into additional dollars at the time. It simply works because it was practical politics. Just think how much better the quality of the decisions will be. We can decide about phosphates without worrying whether the detergent is better or brighter if we have information to go on.

And so we need translators. There are all sorts of areas which we have discussed concerning the making of policies in higher education. We must work together because there are some pitfalls which the public and private sector must both avoid if we're going to be able to fulfill our primary mission. Again, I end where I started, we must not let utility, in the narrow sense of the term, set the curriculum. Aristotle said, when he was asked about the difference between being educated and uneducated, "the difference was the same as being alive and being dead." We must not set a curriculum which will leave them intellectually dead and unaware of themselves and their own humanity. One of the most important

reasons why the public and private sectors must work together, and why the private sector must be preserved, can be expressed through Rousseau's statement about the right of the majority to rule. When he talked about the general will to prevail, he spoke of the difficulty in maintaining the general will. In fact, he believed it could be done on the basis of a small city-state, where people could more or less get to know each other personally, firsthand. Let us never forget how difficult that task is, and how fragile the fabric of our society is. It must be guarded and be protected. The only way to keep it is to make sure that the spirit of community is preserved and maintained, and the challenge all of us have together is this. When we think about the town meeting being reconvened, and when the question is asked, "Who will get up and speak for this community about economics or whatever," who will get up and speak for the entire community? Who has the sense of perspective, the sense of values that will lead him or her to speak to the entire community? Let us hope that we can maintain a system of higher education, public and private, so that together we can say that our graduates are prepared, equipped, and ready to speak for the community.

Thank you very much.